



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY INITIATIVE

Highlights, 2007

A. EPI Profile

EPI is an interdisciplinary program, one of several Public Policy initiatives funded by the Office of Academic Affairs since 1999. It has more than 50 members from 8 colleges and the Glenn School, typically about 20 associate members (graduate students and post-docs), and about 40 affiliate members (nationally and internationally recognized collaborators, distinguished visitors, etc.). EPI programs include seed grants for research, working groups to prepare proposals in response to specific interdisciplinary RFPs, conferences that bring together the academic and policy communities to discuss environmental policy issues, distinguished visiting speakers, workshops, dissertation proposal grants, and travel grants for graduate students to present papers to professional meetings.

EPI's basic purpose is catalytic – to encourage and support environmental policy research, teaching, and outreach at Ohio State; and to build collaborative networks across the Ohio State community, and linking the Ohio State environmental policy community with practitioners in government, NGOs, and the private sector, and with the global research community.

EPI seed grants and working groups have yielded several major extra-mural research grants. EPI has collaborated with on-campus programs such as CCERI, CIRIT, the Center for Resilience, the Center for Mapping, and Women in Development, as well as with a broad range of OSU departments, colleges, and schools; and with government agencies, NGOs, and business organizations. EPI can point to tangible successes (e.g., a NSF Biocomplexity grant, \$1,400,000, 2004-2008), and intangible successes (e.g., EPI's catalytic efforts, along with those of several other cross-cutting programs, were crucial in establishing the credibility of the Carbon, Water, and Climate TIE proposal, which was highest-ranked and funded at \$11.5 million by OAA).

B. Activities

Conference

The last EPI conference was held in late 2006. Since then there have been meetings of the executive committee (Jan 16th) and key collaborators (June 4th) of previous conferences to set an agenda for the next conference.

Seed Grants

No new seed grants have been initiated in 2007. No seed grants are presently active.

Working Groups

The **Biocomplexity working group** received a \$1.4 million NSF grant in autumn, 2004. Research goals are to develop a suite of models to explore the role of human-biophysical linkages in generating complex dynamics of the lake and human systems; to explain phenomena observed in the Lake Erie ecosystem such as adult fish kills and last summer's "Dead Zone;" and to contribute to the science of complex systems modeling by developing methods to aggregate fine-scale models of component processes to coarse-scale models of the coupled system. The research team includes scientists from biology, civil engineering, physics, agricultural and environmental economics, ecological engineering, and social work. Research is well-advanced, and the working group continues to receive support from EPI for special activities not covered by the NSF grant.

Distinguished Visiting Speakers

1. Feb 22nd Casey Hoy: "Healthy Agro-Ecosystems and the Buckeye Tiger"

Casey Hoy presented to a dozen members on Agroecosystems management. Using examples from research in pest management and quantitative ecology, Prof. Hoy highlighted some of the approaches needed to address the long time frames and large areas associated with agricultural ecosystems. The focuses of the presentation was on healthy ecosystems' role in boosting farm income

2. Feb 28th Bruce McCarl: "Agriculture and Forestry as Mitigating forces in the face of climate change"

Bruce's Presentation was cancelled due to a snow storm.

3. June 26th Lenny Smith: "Extracting Insight from Simulations of Weather and Climate"

Dr. Lenny Smith gave an introduction to a diverse university audience of 30 on how we use simulation models in real life. Cast in terms of industry's (energy & insurance) use of weather and climate models for policy decisions, the scientific basis for interpreting simulations as forecasts was explored.

Workshops

2007, May 16th. 2006 grant recipients presented on the progress of their research to a university audience of 16.

- Robyn S. Wilson (Natural Resources, Advisor Joe Arvai), Revisiting Prospect Theory under Attribution"

- Myungje Woo (City and Regional Planning, Advisor: Jean-Michel Guldmann.) *Impacts of Urban Growth Boundaries on Local Economic and Urban Spatial Structure*
- Theresa Wong (Geography, Advisor: Joel Wainwright) *Watersheds, Institutions and River-as-Resource: The Mekong Basin as Object of Development*

Summer dissertation proposal grants

In 2007, EPI funded 3 Ph.D. students for 3 months during the writing of their dissertation proposals in environmental policy:

- Hyowon Ban (Geography, Advisor: Ola Ahlqvist) "Uncertain Growth Boundaries"
- Jack Schieffer (AEDE, Advisor: Steven Wu) "Implementation of Property Rights"
- Atalan Helicke (Geography, Advisor: Becky Mansfield) "Int'l Markets' Impact on Wheat Diversity"

Some of this research has already been presented at professional meetings in these various disciplines.

Graduate student travel grants

No travel grants were awarded in 2007.